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SUBJECT: EMAIL FROM PROFESSOR MEANT TO CONVEY ANC MESSAGE

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) University of South Africa professor Rok Ajulu -- husband of Housing Minister Lindiwe Sisulu -- sent Poloff an email on November 19 discussing his take on the recent formation of the Congress of the People (COPE) and its prospects for success. Ajulu's message is significant for two reasons. One, the ANC sympathizer's statements demonstrate how the African National Congress (ANC) is trying to portray the new party to the rest of the world. Two, his thoughts may demonstrate in part how an old-line ANC member such as Sisulu views the divisions between former President Thabo Mbeki and ANC President Jacob Zuma. End Summary.

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On COPE and on ANC Strategy  
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¶2. (C) Ajulu began the missive by saying that Mbeki is encouraging the COPE leadership. He said that all senior leaders of the new party belonged to the Mbeki faction of the ANC and have been in dispute with the Zuma faction since Polokwane. He judged that Mbeki is "seeking to retaliate against the Zuma faction." He claimed that the new party is based on dissatisfaction from Mbeki's closest supporters and "does not have any ideas that are significantly different than those from the ANC." He noted that the "ANC leadership does not expect them to win more than 10 percent of the vote." He argued that they do not have time to organize, have limited funding, and lack a clear campaign strategy. He said, "Right now most ANC members are reluctant to leave the ANC as they will lose their jobs in government and have no guarantee of a job with the new party." Ajulu's note included a comment from University of Witwatersrand professor and ANC sympathizer Garth Shelton, who said that estimations that show the new party winning 40 percent of the vote are exaggerated. He noted, "It is far too early to determine the support of the new party and it is not clear if the new party will have the funding to contest the election. The ANC has already collected significant funds to finance their campaign." (Note: There are indications that COPE has funding to compete. The national convention organized by Mosiuoa Lekota was costly and drew in supporters from across the country. Most supporters appeared to come from the country's middle class. End Note.)

¶3. (C) Ajulu said the ANC sees President Kgalema Motlanthe as a caretaker only. He noted, "Everyone knows he will step down after the election next year." He wrote that "in the mean time, all the legal actions against Zuma will be brought to an end." He went further to note that "ANC members are seeking to support the Zuma faction in order to guarantee themselves jobs in the next government. The ANC is using its influence and political power to end all legal actions against Zuma." He closed by noting that Zuma still has strong support from the ANC Youth League, ANC Women's League, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Shelton added, "Members of the Mbeki

faction were rewarded with well paying jobs in government ... however, those left out joined the Zuma faction and now expect to be rewarded with senior jobs in the new government."

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Comment  
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14. (C) Post suspects that Ajulu sent his message to reinforce ANC viewpoints on COPE and the ruling party's future. His statements on COPE show how the ANC wants to portray the new party as a weak challenger without time to organize, attract funding, or build a campaign message. His statements also may highlight in part how a long-time player in the ANC such as his wife, Minister Sisulu, sees the situation within her party. Sisulu was a known supporter of Mbeki, but has clearly changed her tune to become a Zuma supporter if she shares her husband's views. ANC stalwarts such as Sisulu, Transport Minister Jeff Radebe, and Arts and Culture Minister Pallo Jordan were once deemed in the Mbeki camp. However, they seem to be clearly ANC first as the party gears up for the election.

BOST